

edward johnson building
faculty of music
university of toronto



SPECIAL CONCERTS SERIES

in co-operation with

C B C RADIO

present

Charles Rosen

pianist

Tuesday, March 23, 1982

MacMillan Theatre, 8 p.m.

Sonata in C Minor D.958 (1828)

Schubert

Allegro

Adagio

Menuetto: Allegro

Allegro

Sonata in A Major D.959 (1828)

Schubert

Allegro

Andantino

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Rondo: Allegretto

Sonata in B Flat Major D.960 (1828)

Schubert

Molto Allegro

Andante sostenuto

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Allegro ma non troppo

It is a commonplace to argue that a composer, such as Schubert, who has remarkable lyric gifts is ill at ease with the structural logic required to construct a closely argued sonata. In some degree that does appear to have been the case with Schubert. He frequently and sometimes obviously modelled his own work on a work by Beethoven. Charles Rosen writes in *The Classical Style* about the relationship of the last movement of the A major sonata (D.959) to the finale of Beethoven's sonata op. 31, no. 1:

What is most remarkable in this close imitation (of Beethoven by Schubert) is its lack of constraint: Schubert moves with great ease within the form which Beethoven created. He has, however, considerably loosened what held it together, and stretched its ligaments unmercifully. Schubert's movement is very much longer than Beethoven's, although the opening themes of both are exactly the same length. This means that the correspondence of part to whole has been considerably altered by Schubert, and explains why his large movements often seem so long, since they are being produced with forms originally intended for shorter pieces. Some of the excitement naturally goes out of these forms when they are so extended, but this is even a condition of the unforced melodic flow of Schubert's music. It must be added that with the finale of this A major Sonata Schubert produced a work that is unquestionably greater than its model.

In the last three piano sonatas, and in a few other late works, Schubert resolved the problem of being a Romantic composer writing within a Classical tradition by looking back over some of his own innovations and those of Beethoven to solutions which more closely relate to the quintessential classicism of Mozart and Haydn. His greatest works must perforce defy any reduction to a simple textbook category of style. Again, Mr. Rosen at the conclusion of *The Classical Style*:

The synthesis of the means of expression we call the classical style was by no means exhausted when it was abandoned, but submission to its discipline was not an easy matter. A discontinuity of style between Beethoven and the generation that followed is an inescapable hypothesis for understanding the musical language of the nineteenth century. Schubert, however, cannot be easily placed into any one category — Romantic, post-classical, or classical — and he stands as an example of the resistance of the material of history to the most necessary generalizations, and as a reminder of the irreducibly personal facts that underlie the history of style.

These three sonatas were first published in 1839 in Vienna by A. Diabelli and Co.; the publisher dedicated the edition to Robert Schumann.

— notes by Carl Morey

**Next event: University of Toronto Concert Choir
Wednesday, March 24, 8 p.m. Walter Hall**